

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Minutes of Meeting 02-01

held

Friday, January 25, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. in H 769

Present:	N. Esmail (Chair) M.O. Ahmad S.T. Alkass J.W. Arwood R. Bhat T.D. Bui M.Y. Chen T. Fancott J.C. Giguère	G.J. Gouw L. Harris J. Jans R. Jayakumar K. Khorasani L. Landsberger O. Moselhi L. Narayanan M. Nimchuk	C. Paradisis C. Petrone H. Poorooshasb L. Quesnel P. Regimbald M.R. Soleymani S. Tahar G. Vatistas S. de Souza (Recording Secretary)
Observer:	M. Silas		
Regrets:	W. Ghaly F. Haghighat	S. Malik T. Radhakrishnan	L. Zack
Guest:	B. Black		

1. Adoption of Agenda

Motion That the revised agenda be adopted (J.W. Arwood, T. Fancott)

02-01-01

Vote: Carried unanimously

2. Adoption of Minutes

The following corrections were notified:

- Page 4, Item 6 : that INDU 448 should read as INDU 428 – Concurrent Engineering
- Page 4, Item 5 : that ENGR 690 should read as ENGR 691 – Topics in Engineering: Design of Two-time-scale Control Systems

Motion That the Minutes of Meeting 01-07 (November 30, 2001) be adopted, as corrected
02-01-02 (J.C. Giguère, G. Vatistas)

Vote: Carried unanimously

3. Chair's Remarks

State of the Affairs of the Faculty

The Chair remarked that all indicators are exciting and positive. This year, all equipment in teaching labs is being renewed. The size of the operation is huge and its priority very high. The

Chair, Associate Deans and Department Chairs have decided to equip each teaching lab in the Faculty with state of the art equipment before May 31, 2002.

Enrolment

It has been agreed that it is time now to consolidate the level of enrolment. We cannot sustain any further increase in enrolment. The Faculty has the highest number of graduate and undergraduate student enrolment in Quebec. The student headcount is about 5800. Currently, we have 120 faculty members. There is a need to hire 20+ faculty members before the end of this academic year. As agreed upon with the Senior Administration, the Faculty requires a strength of 160 faculty members. This is the size envisaged for the Faculty in terms of student enrolment and full-time faculty members.

Note is to be made of the size and health of research in the Faculty. Graduate enrolment, in the Faculty, is about 33% of the total enrolment whereas in the whole of Concordia University, graduate enrolment is only about 10% of the total enrolment. In other words, 2/3 is undergraduate students and 1/3 is graduate students. The Chair noted that this level matches the best research schools in Canada. Therefore, we are not an undergraduate teaching Faculty but rather a healthy research Faculty. This year, the Faculty is enjoying a 65% increase in Masters/PhD research student enrolment relative to last year.

New Building

Tenders for excavation will be going out. The work is expected to start in April. We have assurances that the new building will be opened in September 2004. The design plans have been signed. The Senior Administration will be meeting with the Provincial Premier regarding the Engineering building.

Support for Research

An 'Estimation of Living Expenses for Research Graduate Students', was distributed. Dr. Vatistas, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs and Research, informed the members that he conducted a study with the objective of providing funds for research graduate students. The ideal group for study was international graduate students. The findings of the study indicate that an international student requires about \$19,500 for expenses whereas a local student requires approximately \$15,000. If 2 students share accommodation, the figure drops to \$14,000 and 12,500 respectively.

Dr. Vatistas announced that this year due to a Faculty initiative, a professor's support for research would be increased. But most of the money is to bridge the gap between the student's basic requirements and the funds available to him. Therefore, it should be clearly understood that these funds are not intended to replace the money offered by the professor to the student. Dr. Vatistas added that by next Friday professors, who are supervising thesis students, would receive the monies to be given to the graduate students. The duration of support is 2 years for a Masters student and 3 years for a PhD student. This year's support for a PhD student will be \$7,000 and for a Masters student \$5,000. There are restrictions and the Financial Control Office of the Faculty will monitor the system because the purpose is to improve the quality of research graduate students. The Chair said that he was keen to see an increase in the number of good research graduate students. The present approach, although not optimal, appears to be the most practical.

The Chair said that the Faculty of Arts and Science offers TAs of \$7,500. This does not work in engineering. In fact, the Faculty Executive resists going back to the system where one price fits all. We have 270 Masters students and 117 PhD students. 390 PhD/Masters students is the core of research. We have 208 TAs and common to the 2 lists are about 80 students. Therefore only about 80 students of the 390 core of research students are participating in TAs. 120 students in TAs are not in the Dean's radar (2 years for Masters students and 3 years for PhD students). These students are either staying beyond 2 years for Masters program or 3 years for PhD or some are

actually employed. The vehicle of TAs is inadequate for us and the work of the TA is not sufficient to support the huge research undertaking of the Faculty.

The following are some of the answers to questions that were raised on research support:

- In the case of students who receive governmental, organizational or institutional support, other than Concordia's awards and stipends, there will be no research support given to professors.
- In the case of students who get loans under the Provincial loans and bursaries system, the Chair noted that it was a good point, which requires study.
- As it is difficult to write rules that fit every situation, members were invited to speak to Daniel Therrien or Dr. Vatisas. However, a written explanation was needed. The system has to be centrally administered.
- The Faculty cannot offer bursaries or scholarships, as per government rules.

The Chair emphasized that the purpose of research support is to stay competitive, attract quality students and help them. There is room for revision should new cases arise. The system can be improved with use. Also, there is a degree of uncertainty as we do not know next year's budget.

It was suggested that faculty members receiving support be duly informed of all the conditions. Members were encouraged to speak to other faculty members about research support.

4. **Interim Report of the Committee to Standardize Teaching Assistantship Practices (ECFC Doc. 2002-01-01)**

The Chair explained that the purpose of bringing the report before Council was to acquaint members with the document and solicit opinions and comments.

Dr. Khorasani explained that the graduate students were concerned about streamlining student awards and scholarships. A committee, mandated by the Provost, examined the procedures in each Faculty with the purpose of arriving at a unified approach to graduate student support namely Teaching Assistantships. Each Faculty brought its own model. Dr. Jans assimilated the information and came up with the recommendations embodied in the document.

Dr. Jans explained that the hourly rate was determined in conjunction with the Associate/Vice Deans of different Faculties. It was pointed out that job descriptions have to be drawn up at the departmental level as expectations vary considerably from one department to another. A need to develop internal rules was also expressed.

It was pointed out that although TAs are available for the best students, these very students do not seem interested as they are eager to complete their program of study and research work. The Chair noted that a debate on how much a graduate student's education should involve TA was needed. This will compensate for the lack of graduate student response to TAs. It was also pointed out that some students are unable to do TA work because of the lack of language skills. For this purpose, prescreening becomes necessary.

It was suggested that TAs could be a marketing tool to attract good graduate students. They can be used to increase funding available to students. However, there has to be some mechanism in place to allow for a percentage of TAs for this purpose. The Chair said that the subject of preallocated TAs would be examined. Inequities in the system have to be addressed so that the funds are properly distributed.

5. Faculty Policy on International Exchange (ECFC Doc. 2002-01-02)

The Chair informed the members that Nanette Plant, Manager, Student Affairs, is seeking directions on international exchange students due to the increase in student enrolment and change in MEQ regulations.

A member pointed out that due to a change in MEQ regulations for international students (except for those coming from France) a balance is needed, that is, if we do not send out a corresponding number of students that we receive, we will not be funded for the differential. Also, as our students do not seem interested in going abroad, we will lose funding if similar numbers are not maintained. A change in the ad hoc system is required. We have to ensure place for our own students. However, exchange may be encouraged in areas where enrolment is low. Also, if exchange is on a par basis, additional personnel will be needed to handle the paper work.

A member pointed out that until recently we have not had a good predictor as to how many students we can expect in the senior classes. We need to come to grips with the enrolment and learn to predict the number of students entering the classroom. If this can be determined, we can predict the number of students we can afford to have from other countries. Also, with a predictor space can be provided. The new rules apply to all countries except France. It was noted that the Faculty is receiving requests from other countries such as Bremen and the U.S. It would be beneficial to send our students by way of exchange to do research in the U.S. As per the new program, the Quebec Government is providing \$1000/month as subsidy for students going abroad in addition to the financial aid that the student receives. One problem has been the lack of publicity among faculty members and students. It was mentioned that under the present economic situation, it might be advantageous to encourage students to go abroad although they may lose time recovering credits for courses because the educational/life experience gains are immense. It was therefore recommended that exchange continue at about the same level. However, we need to publicize, encourage students and work together with ECA so that we can send a certain number of students abroad. Exchange is encouraged because it helps the students.

CLOSED SESSION

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

OPEN SESSION

7. Other business

There was no other business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m. (G. Vatistas)